The Daybook

Volume 6 Issue 3 Spring 2000

In This Issue…

HAMPTON ROADS NAVAL MUSEUM
Local History. World Events.

About The Daybook

The Daybook is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. Book reviews are solely the opinion of the reviewer.

The HRNM is operated and funded by Commander Navy Region Mid-Atlantic. The museum is dedicated to the study of 225 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free. *The Daybook*'s purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. *The Daybook* can be reached at (757) 322-2993, by fax at (757) 445-1867, e-mail at gbcalhoun@nsn.cmar.navy.mil, or write *The Daybook*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.hrnm.navy.mil

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Features

Cover Photograph: Of all of the American Civil War stories of broken families, one of the most interesting ones is that of the Lee family. While several Lees chose to serve Virginia, U.S. Naval officer Samuel Phillips Lee was a strong supporter of the Union. As an "acting" rear admiral, Lee oversaw the operations of the Hampton Roads-based North Atlantic Blockading Squadron and the James River Squadron for most of the two squadrons existence. On several occasions, S.P. Lee's ships directly opposed his cousin Robert E. Lee's army and ultimately caused its downfall.

Building History

The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

Happy Spring! We have a lot of things going on at the museum this season. First of all, I'm pleased to introduce the new officers of the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation (HRNHF). Our new president is **Samuel B. Segar, Jr.,** our new vice-president is **Hon. Vincent J. Thomas,** and our new secretary-treasurer is **Cmdr. John M. Barry, USN (Ret.)**. We also have new board members: **Maryellen Baldwin, Benjamin G. Cottrell, Hon. James H. Flippen, Jr., Carter B.S. Furr, Edwin C. Kellam, Jr., Rear Adm. P.W. Parcells, USN (Ret.),** and **Gordon B. Tayloe, Jr.** Welcome all!

One of the projects the foundation has supported has been the reproduction of the submersible *H.L. Hunely*. This full-scale reproduction is run by the Friends of the Hunely and arrived here at the beginning of May. The museum and Nauticus through the generosity of the HRNHF and Leon & Mary Chevallay were able to bring this important traveling to display to Norfolk.

Our newest staff member, Michael Taylor, is the mastermind behind the museum's collaboration on a new project about naval architecture in this region. Most people are familiar with historic buildings from the Jamestown Exposition. But, did you know that the Navy oversees hundreds of historic structures located from Yorktown to Oceana Naval Air Station?

The Navy is committed to following the National Historic Preservation Act. Compliance includes documentation and public education regarding these structures.

Michael is our action officer on this project. Right now, he is assembling a focus group to consult with the Virginia Historical Preservation Office in order to study the best methods of sharing our resources.

Prospective projects could include websites, CD-ROMs, and hands-on and computer-based travelling exhibits. We are targeting audiences as diverse as area civilians, Naval Station personnel, and local schoolchildren, in an effort to share both the architectural importance of the Hampton Roads area and the role that cultural resource management plays in safeguarding our country's historic properties. If you are interested in helping, call Michael directly at 445-8574.

In other news, we have finished the first new permanent exhibit since our relocation to downtown Norfolk in 1994. "The Battle of the Atlantic" exhibit uses the latest in interactive technology to give the visitor a true experience about the events in the Atlantic and in Hampton Roads during World War II. See page three for a glimpse at this exciting exhibit, then come to the museum to experience it for yourself.

Becky

100 Years of Silence:

An Exhibit Commemorating the Submarine Force

Now on display on the 2nd deck outside the museum. See a small sample of the past, present, and the future of the U.S. Navy's Submarine Force. Visit http://www.sublant.navy.mil for information on the Submarine Force Centennial Celebration

HAMPTON ROADS NAVAL★MUSEUM

Local History. World Events.

Museum Opens New Permanent Exhibit on the Battle of the Atlantic

The Museum is pleased to announce that its new Battle of the Atlantic exhibit is now open. This new permanent exhibit replaces the aging map display that had served the museum for many years.

The exhibit itself is broken up into three main sections and uses a combination of interactive and traditional displays. The interactive displays are two touch screen computers that allow the visitor to learn about facts like life in the area during the war and the role that marine camouflage played. Visitors will also see newsreel footage of the 1939 scuttling of the German pocket battleship *Graf Spee* and the 1945 surrender of *U-858* in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

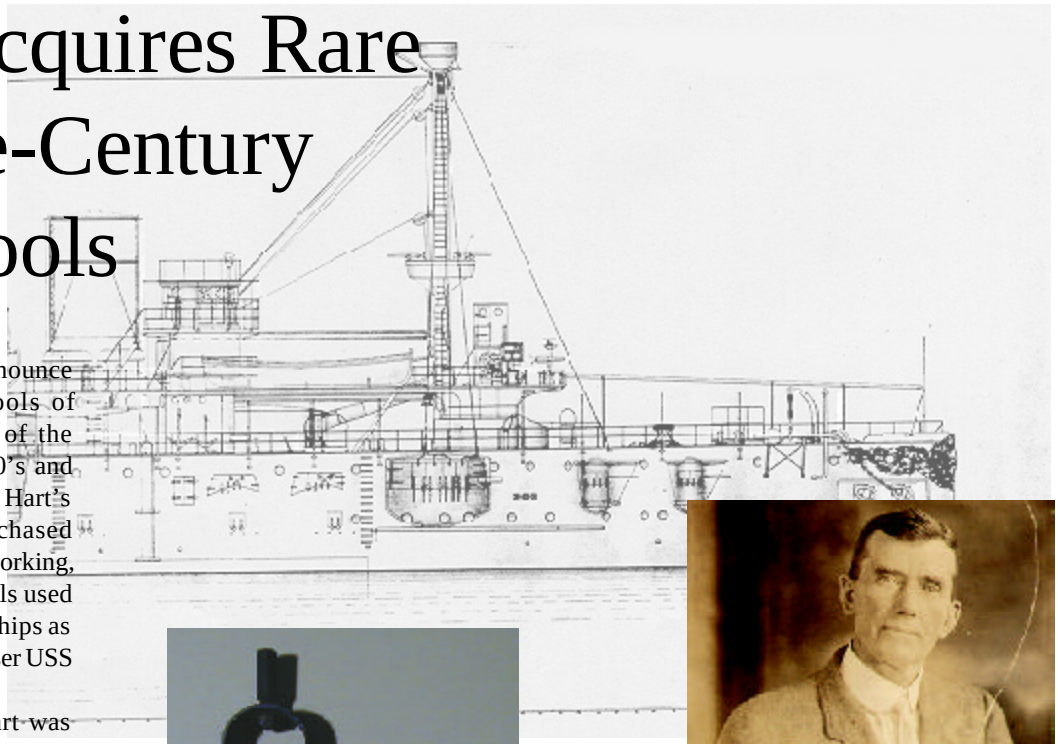
Using this combination of traditional and modern displays, the exhibit shows how Hampton Roads played a leading role in this crucial campaign. Call 322-2984 for more information on the exhibit.

The first section of the museum's new Battle of the Atlantic focuses on the early stages of the conflict. Included in this section are German artifacts, news footage of the scuttling of the pocket battleship Graf Spee*, and an introduction to the theater of war. (Photo by Mike Taylor)*

Section three of the new exhibit (shown at right) focuses on the last years of the campaign. Included in this part is a battle flag flown on the Norfolk-based destroyer USS Ellyson *(DD-454), news footage of the surrender of* U-858 *to American authorities in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and an interactive display that presents information about the campaign. (Photo by Mike Taylor)*

Section two of the new exhibit (shown at left) focuses on the crucial period of 1942 and 1943. Included in this section is an interactive display that allows the visitor to learn about one of three lives in Hampton Roads. The visitor can choose between an African-American teenager who delivers the Journal and Guide*, a nurse who works at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, or a shipyard worker turned destroyer escort sailor. (Photo by Mike Taylor)*

Museum Acquires Rare Turn-of-the-Century Shipyard Tools

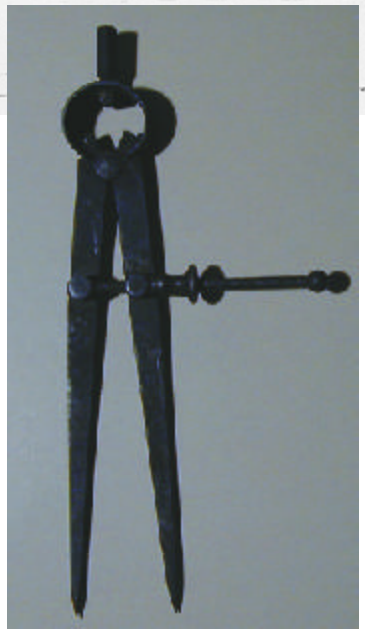


The museum is excited to announce that it has acquired the tools of Francis Hart, a ship-fitter of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in the 1880's and 1890's. Through the generosity of Hart's descendents, the museum has purchased over 40 rare, late 19th century woodworking, sheet metal, and leather working tools used in the construction of such famous ships as the battleship USS *Texas* and the cruiser USS *Raleigh* (C-8).

According to his supervisor, Hart was "sober, intelligent, and faithful in his duties." One local history commented that he was "unexcelled in his line of work" and his skills were much sought after. He was born and educated in Ireland and learned his ship construction trade in Scotland. He immigrated to the United States in 1883 and began working for the Norfolk Naval Shipyard in 1885. As a ship-fitter, his job was to construct parts of the ship and to verify that ship construction was done correctly according to the architect's plans.

We hope to have this extraordinary collection will be ready for public viewing soon.

Francis Hart in his later years. He was born in Ireland and educated in Scotland. He immigrated to the United States in 1883. He later moved to and lived in the Berkeley section of Norfolk in 1885. Shortly after moving here, he began working at the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. (Photo provided by his descendents)



This is Hart's pair of dividers which would be used in layout work. They could have been used in both steel and wood work projects. (Photo by Mike Taylor)

Hart's pocket watch (Photo by Mike Taylor)

Hart's hand drill and bits. Most of the tools in the collection are in good working order and could still be used to build items. (Photo by Mike Taylor)

Even though we call the late 19th, early 20th century the "Age of Steel," architects called for lavish amounts of wood to be used in the warships. This was especially true in officers' spaces such as this one on board the cruiser USS Newark (C-1). *A skilled constructor like Hart would be needed to build such spaces. (Naval Institute photo)*

In this collection there are five different kinds of tools for wood moldings. (Photo by Mike Taylor)

This is a center hole punch tool. Made of brass and steel, this tool allows a constructor to form perfectly centered smaller holes inside bored out larger holes. (Photo by Mike Taylor)

No good tool set would be complete without some kind of monkey wrench to turn the several thousand rivets and bolts on the new steel ships. Being that Hart was from the British Isles, he might have called this tool an "adjustable spanner." (Photo by Mike Taylor)

Parts of a ship had to be indentified and this letter stamp kit was just the thing for it. A complete set would include all letters of the alphabet and zero through nine in numbers. Each letter would then be hammered in. (Photo by Mike Taylor)

The Navy's Virginia Yankee

Robert E. Lee's Cousin Takes Command of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron

by Sarah Petrides

Though not as charismatic as some of the other Union flag officers, Samuel Phillips Lee was among the more efficient and effective commanders in the U.S. Navy during the American Civil War. (HRNM photo)

As the nation divided during the Civil War, so did families. The prominent Lee family of Virginia distinguished itself in both the Union and Confederacy. Samuel Phillips Lee, the cousin of General Robert E. Lee, was less of a recognized personality than his adored relative. Nevertheless, "Phil" as intimates called him, served honorably in the U.S. Navy during the conflict. His most prominent role was that of Acting Rear Admiral in charge of the North Atlantic Blockade based out of Hampton Roads.

This Unionist Lee was born during an age of American Naval resurgence—the year 1812. His father, Francis Lightfoot Lee, was the nephew of Robert E. Lee's great-grandfather—however, the cousins were less than six years apart in age; the general was the eldest. Unlike Robert E. Lee's roguish father, "Light-Horse" Harry Lee, Francis Lee was known in his family as being "calmness and philosophy itself." This quiet, reluctantly political man married Phillips Lee's mother, Jane Fitzgerald, several years after the death of his first wife. When Jane Fitzgerald Lee died during Phillips' fourth year, his father was destroyed. The loss of two well-beloved wives in less than a decade unhinged the kindly man's mind, and Phillips Lee and his four siblings were left virtual orphans, insolvent—as their father's estate was not profiting—and thrown on the mercy of their (luckily) fairly generous extended family.

Likely these early troubles influenced Lee's decision to join the Navy at the age of thirteen. This particular branch of the service tended to attract young, adventurous men from the impecunious middle class; many of these were, like Lee, without parents and in need of work to support siblings. Lee must have been an impressive candidate to win a midshipman's warrant at such a young age. Although the Navy accepted applicants as young as twelve, midshipmen's positions were usually given to candidates between the ages of fifteen and eighteen with both political connections and prior experience. Lee himself thought his appointment was the result of President John Quincy Adams' admiration for Richard Henry Lee, Francis Lee's brother and a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Although he received his appointment in 1825, Phillips Lee did not step aboard a ship until two years later. The Navy ordered him to the sloop USS *Hornet* only after he flooded the Secretary's office with letters begging to be deployed. Phillips Lee was determined to work in the Navy, whether he was expected to or not.

Samuel Phillips Lee's determination to fulfill his obligations and see that others fulfilled theirs did not mute itself during his first years of sea duty. His diary draws a portrait of a studious, duty-conscious young man determined to distinguish himself—but he would not sacrifice his personal honor in order to advance. In 1829, the seventeen-year-old Lee gained the unfavorable attentions of his captain on the frigate *Java* when he challenged several shipmates to a duel. Allegedly, their offense was making crude remarks about Lee and a young British woman he was seeing at the time. Despite this and other such occasional professional problems brought on by Lee's sense of honor, he progressed quickly in his naval career. In fact, his sense of rectitude probably increased his competence when he served as the Sailing Master for the *Brandywine* in 1834, a job that required alertness and attention to detail.

His abilities did not go unrewarded. He was given an Acting Lieutenantship aboard the sloop-of-war *Vincennes*, where he served for several years. Lee's first twelve years in the Navy were marked with achievement. His thirteenth year of service, however, would remain a permanent painful memory to the proud officer. In 1838, the *Vincennes*, and Lee, were chosen to join the Wilkes Expedition, which was an ambitious scientific project launched by the U.S. Navy. The point of the trip was to survey natural habitats and people groups worldwide; the expedition ended up travelling to such diverse areas as Tonga and the South Pole (where they discovered that Antarctica was, in fact, a continent). Lee was posted as one of four lieutenants on the USS *Peacock*.

At first, an invitation to join the Wilkes Expedition seemed like an assignment guaranteed to increase Phillips Lee's prestige. Further, Lee was excited by the science of sailing, and he knew that the excursion would offer him ample opportunity to navigate, map previously uncharted seas, and generally observe and improve the mechanics of

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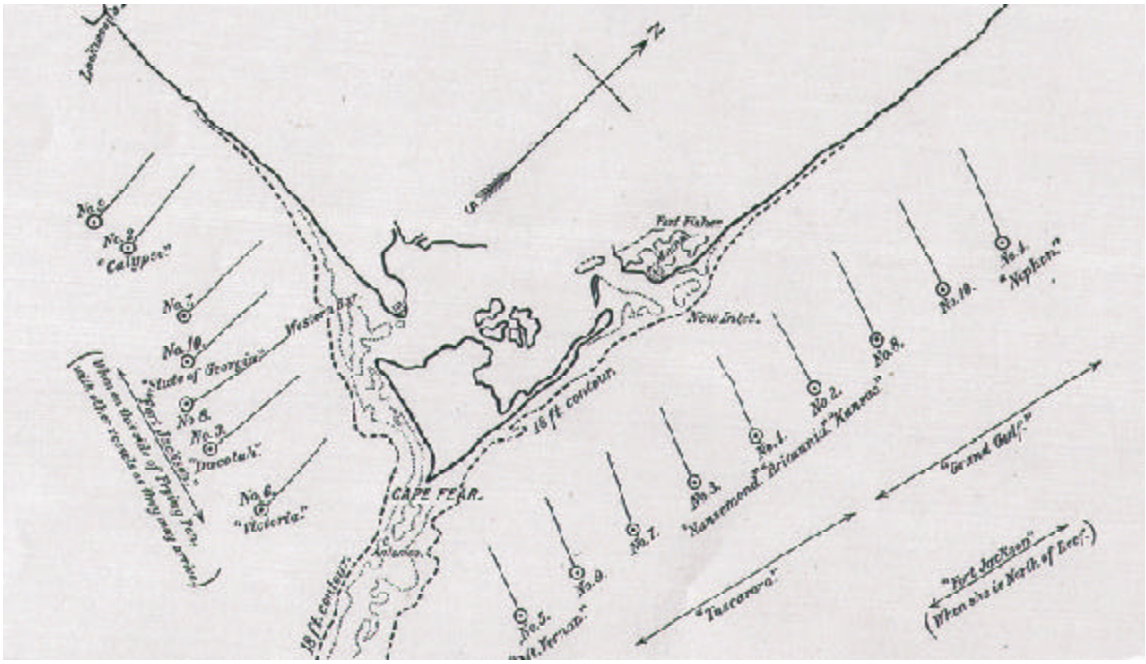
running a ship. What Lee did not anticipate, however, were the conflicts he would become embroiled in with the notoriously volatile Wilkes. Some of the other sailors on the trip did not measure up to Lee's standards of naval decorum and thoroughness. Wilkes, as the leader of the expedition, was responsible for the overall demeanor and morale of the crew, and Lee thought (as he recorded in his diary) that Wilkes was not doing a good job. Lee could not keep his disapproval to himself, and his attitude insulted Wilkes. Also, Wilkes resented Lee's stubborn refusal to call him "captain" which title Lee declined to use, as Wilkes' rank was actually that of lieutenant commander. Wilkes, out of pique, assigned officers junior to Lee the command of two of the ships in the squadron.

To Lee, this was a violation of military protocol and a grave insult. Following a short time of conflict, Wilkes dismissed Lee and ordered him back to the United States. This was a shameful blow to the upright officer, who resented the injustice done him and rankled under the disgrace of dismissal. Lee was comforted by the Court of Inquiry opened on Wilkes due to his aggressive behavior with many of the officers on the expedition. For his part, Wilkes remained angry at Lee for decades. In his memoir of the expedition, Wilkes huffed, "I cannot but express my surprise, even at this distant day, that any officers embarked on this undertaking could have so far lost sight of their duty as to attempt to throw obstacles in the way of the prompt execution of the duties they owed to the country, and the service on which they were engaged, or would have allowed selfish feelings to predominate over those for the public good."

In a grim mood, Lee returned to the United States and morosely made his way to White Sulphur Springs. There he soon regained possession of himself in the salutary presence of Elizabeth Blair, the daughter of powerful, well-connected Washingtonians. In between voyages during the next four years, Lee paid court to the popular belle. Elizabeth Blair's heart, too, was soon set on the officer, but her father, frightened by the rigor and instability of naval life, forbade the match. Only after his daughter declared that the marriage would take place regardless of family opinion did he reluctantly allow the match.



Lee's main responsibility as commanding officer of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron was to intercept ships bound for ports in North Carolina. Capturing blockade-runners proved to be extremely difficult and the squadron netted only a few captures. In 1863, Lee developed an innovative blockade pattern three zones deep off the coast of Wilmington, NC. While many ships still got through, the number of captures increased dramatically. (From the 1864 Official Records of the War of Rebellion*)*

Following his marriage in 1843, Lee continued his rigorous seafaring schedule. When he was ashore, he and his wife (and later, his son) lived as upscale Washingtonians. However, Lee was not at the nation's capital during the tumultuous day of secession. Lizzie Blair Lee wrote her husband as he commanded the *Vandalia* in the East Indies Squadron. She had attended the meeting of Congress in which the Southern states seceded, and was shocked and grieved by the turn of events. The Blairs were Unionists from the first.

Although Phillips Lee was a Virginian, he, too, expressed no doubts about siding with the Union. While his cousin Robert was sorrowfully deciding to support his native state, Lee was sailing the *Vandalia* back from the coast of the East Indies without orders, to support his government during its time of need. This act was an amazing piece of behavior from the usually protocol-conscious officer. Luckily, his superiors were grateful that he was back, and so chose to overlook the impropriety of the move. Phillips Lee's true allegiance was not to a state, but to the ships and waters under the American eye. His years spent at sea had protected him from the attitudes corroding most of the South. He arrived in the States ready to preserve the Union.

The Union was ready and willing to be preserved. Almost immediately after he landed ashore, Lee received an assignment to Charleston, South Carolina. He was to serve as part of the "Anaconda Plan", the blockade that the Union intended to squeeze the life out of the Confederacy. As Lee captured blockade runners in the sailing-ship *Vandalia*, his well-connected in-laws campaigned for him to get another ship. They all thought the *Vandalia* was much less effective a vessel than any steamer would be. They wanted to see Lee distinguish himself in capturing ships; surely the thought of the prize money that captors received fueled the family's zeal. In early 1862, Lee was put in charge of the steamer *Oneida*, which was assigned to the Gulf Blockading Squadron. Lee distinguished himself sufficiently in actions against rebel forces that Navy brass picked him to replace Louis Goldsborough as the

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Acting Rear Admiral of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, based out of Hampton Roads.

Lee took command of the squadron, joining the flagship *Minnesota* on September 4, 1862. Less than one month later, he was already butting heads with the Union Army in the person of General John Dix. General Dix was a man with a social conscience. He was interested in protecting the Army's rights and also those of the citizens of Norfolk, which his army was, at the time, occupying. The general was therefore not interested in following the letter of the law when it came to enforcing the blockade. He wanted goods to get through for the use of Norfolk civilians, and he was prepared to use Army transport vessels to meet this goal. Of course, to Lee, for whom duty and orders were of paramount importance, this was both a violation of military etiquette and a betrayal of the Unionist cause. Lee and Dix fired polite but firm letters back and forth: "I respectfully request your aid in your department in putting a stop to all further attempts to violate the blockade and the instructions of the department, which I have the honor to communicate with you," Lee wrote.

Dix would not budge: "I shall do all in my power hereafter, as I have heretofore, to aid you in preventing any commercial intercourse with Norfolk, *except* such *as is permitted by the Secretary of the Treasury…*" [italics added].

To resolve the dispute, both men wrote their respective secretaries—naturally, this settled nothing. Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles agreed with Lee's strict interpretation of blockade rules, stating that "that there is distress in Norfolk and the whole insurrectionary region I doubt not…. The relief is in the hands of the people who have only to be loyal to be relieved. The case is not one of sympathy, but of duty."

Of course, these sentiments were pleasant to the duty-loving Lee, but they did not sit well with Dix and those in command of him. The Treasury Department was on Dix's side, and those of his later replacements, John Foster and Benjamin Butler. This conflict waxed and waned throughout the duration of Lee's tenure in the North Atlantic Blockade.

Months after his installation, Lee continued to be busy. Despite the mix-up in his initial collaboration with the Army, he continued to aid them in various operations, most of which depended on surprise to seize enemy supplies and destroy transportation, and then quickly withdraw. Lee was also busy lobbying Secretary of the Navy Welles for more ships. As rebel forces gained ground in both North Carolina and Virginia, he foresaw his current forces becoming overextended. In an unofficial communiqué to Assistant Secretary G.V. Fox, Lee wrote somewhat desperately, "Please give me a list of vessels I am to have, stating when each will be here…. The good weather, the weak state of the blockade, and the pressure on Richmond are the main causes for urgency now. The enemy has had ample time in eighteen months to prepare his defense…. I am arguing for all the force you can give—more monitors [*sic*], if you can." Luckily, the Navy heeded Lee's pleas and, the day after Lee began marshalling his meager forces around Wilmington, N.C., Hampton Roads, and many of the smaller ports in North Carolina were pretty well secured, but Wilmington continued to be a bee-hive of activity for blockade runners. Secretary Welles sent a letter giving Lee temporary command of eleven additional vessels. However, there were never enough ships to satisfy Lee. The theme of "more ships, please" remained a thorn in the flesh of both the Secretary and the admiral.

Lee frequently had differences with the local Union Army commander. With General Dix for example, Lee wanted to stop all incoming food shipments to Norfolk per the blockade instructions. Dix, whose job it was to garrison the occupied city, believed some exceptions should have been allowed (Engraving from Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*)*

These sorts of administrative duties too often claimed Lee's time. As Rear Adm. David Dixon Porter later pointed out, though, the job of directing the blockade required less of a warrior and more of a competent administrator. Still, it was an onerous duty for Lee to be chained to his desk, analyzing requests from the men under him and sending to Washington for permission to act as he saw fit. Lee found pleasure, though, in devising schemes of offensive and defensive action for the ships under his command. Apparently, too, these plans were effective. By November of his tenure, Lee's ships around the crucial port of Wilmington had captured fifteen enemy ships. It was Lee's idea to form a double boundary around this port, which proved amazingly effective in capturing blockade-runners. The prize money resulting from these actions was immense—the squadron received around $2,000,000 total in the dollar of the time. Since Lee was the commanding officer of the blockade squadron, he personally received over $200,000 of this prize money.

Lee's squadron still had the duties of assisting, one might say bailing out, the Army. In the Spring of 1863, General Longstreet's corps temporarily detached from the Army of Northern Virginia and launched a small offensive towards Suffolk and Union positions on the Peninsula. Hostilities broke out on April 11, 1863, at Fort McGruder near Williamsburg, Virginia. The Union army feared that the forts they controlled in Suffolk were also

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at risk. In response to their panicked pleas, Lee deployed gunboats up the James, Nansemond, and York rivers near the embattled towns. Despite this precaution, the Confederates pushed United States troops down from Williamsburg and cornered them at the mouth of Queen's Creek.

Pandemonium ensued among the Unionists, who thought they were going to lose their valuable foothold on the eastern seaboard. The United States Navy, however, rose to the occasion by holding their gunboat positions behind their beleaguered army, using their fire to push the Confederate troops from their positions. Brig. Gen. Getty and Lt. Cushing of the U.S. Navy, confident with Acting Rear Admiral Lee's forces behind them, faced down the redoubtable General Longstreet and his tremendous forces. The battle turned towards the Union on April 19, when Lee's Lt. Lamson, commanding the blockade's gunboat fleet, assisited soliders of the 89th New York Volunteers and the 8th Connecticut. That morning, blockade gunboats opened fire in tandem on Confederate entrenchments, covering Lamson as he sailed abreast of the rebel batteries. The gunboats then ceased firing, and with split-second timing, Lamson beached his craft too close to the Confederates for them to fire. Immediately, the troops that had been hiding on his gunboat disembarked, followed by the Navy's four howitzers. The rout was complete, and the few remaining days of fighting merely solidified the Union victory.

The admiral tried to prevent such surprises from happening again. With a father-to-son like attitude, he would frequently write to local army commanders and offer his unsolicited advice on how to conduct ground operations. For example, he pleaded several times with the commander of Union forces in North Carolina for them to withdraw and consolidate their positions along the coast. It was the admiral's belief that the Union Army was spread too thinly trying to garrison every little coastal village and town and that they were not helping to win the war this way. He adopted a similar tone with officers within his direct chain. When writing out orders to the officers of the gunboats USS *Miami* and *Southfield*, he instructed them how much powder to use in their guns. He also warned them on to watch for cannonballs bouncing off the ironclad CSS *Albemarle* should the gunboats encounter her.

Confederate forces took to the offensive in the Spring of 1863 when Gen. Longstreet's corps detached from the main army and attacked Suffolk, VA. The local Union garrison was caught completely by surprise and sent back many panic-stricken notes to Norfolk begging for reinforcements. Lee dispatched several shallow-draft gunboats to prevent the Confederates from crossing the river. Lt. Lamson and Cushing's quick worked saved the Union Army garrison from a total disaster. (Print from the Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*)*

Lee's warning went unheeded and the local commanders suffered the consequences. In the spring of 1864, local Confederate forces went on the offensive with the assistance of *Albemarle* and put many garrisons to flight. At Plymouth, NC, 2,200 Union soldiers were surrounded and captured. *Miami* and *Southfield* engaged the ironclad and had several of them bounce

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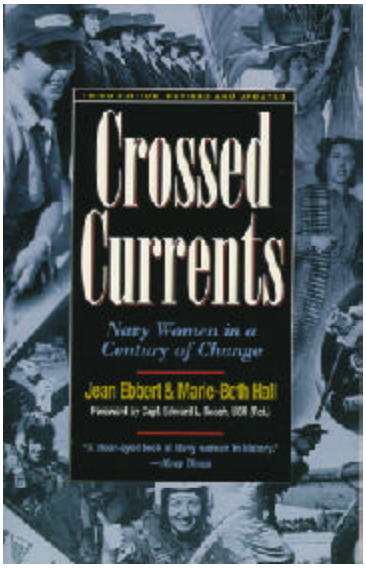
Book Reviews

Crossed Currents: Navy Women in a Century of Change

by Jean Ebbert & Marie-Beth Hall
Reviewed by M. Helene Tisdale



One of my college professors claimed that history could be defined as change over time. That is certainly applicable when one looks at the role of women serving in the Armed Forces, more specifically in the Navy. The resistance to women serving in any military capacity stems from an idea that women need to be protected; if men are fighting the wars in order to protect the women, how are women able to play the role of protectors? Two major wars the United States fought, the American Revolution and the Civil War, took place on American soil. The occurance of a woman using a gun to protect her house and land was more common during that time. By the time World War I started the idea of sending women overseas, especially in a combat role, was absurd. However, when the need for "manpower" is higher than the available number of men, people are open to change. In *Crossed Currents: Navy Women in a Century of Change* Jean Ebbert and Marie-Beth Hall document the changes made through trial and error as the Navy struggled to fit women into a male controlled domain.

Jean Ebbert & Marie-Beth Hall. *Crossed Currents: Navy Women in a Century of Change*. Washington, D.C.: Batsford Brassey, Inc., 1999. 409 pages. ISBN 1-57488-193-0. $18.95

One of the main obstacles with integrating women into the Navy was that no plan had ever been formulated that addressed where the women should train, what uniforms should look like, even how to designate the sex of the sailor on orders. Ebbert and Hall demonstrate how distinguishing the standards for men and women too drastically created more resentment between the men and their new compatriots. The theroy they present is that men were not thrilled about being sent into dangerous locations themselves, so when the female replacements arrived some men were not helpful when it was time to train the female sailors. The documentation concerning the numbers of women who volunteered to be a WAVES, for example, (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service) helped to prove that women were willing to serve, even while the nuts and bolts of the system had to be worked out. The authors were glowing in their praise of the fledgling WAVES and their determination and perserverance.

One problem with the authors' documentation, however, is that they paint the picture of happy cheerful women who were willing to serve in any way they were allowed. During the Vietnam War, for example, only nine women officers were assigned to serve "in country." Despite the fact that many women's qualifications to serve surpassed those of the men who were being accepted, the quota for women was never raised. However, the authors concluded, "The women knew that if they were not allowed to carry a share of the burden, then the men would have to carry more." This does not seem to be a valid reason to want to serve in a war zone. More realistic reasons to want to serve in the combat zone would have been a belief in the goals of the war, wanting to serve in the full capacity they had been trained, and wanting the promotions and awards that can only be earned by serving in combative roles. Easing the burden on men would not be a realistic worry of women in the Navy.

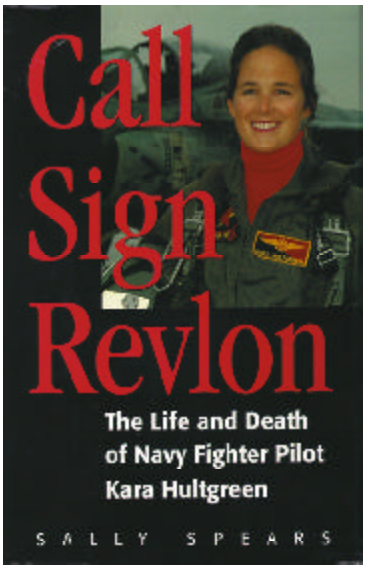
This is the third edition of this book. The first edition was printed in 1992, before the Tailhook findings were complete. The third edition offers a full account of what happened and how the investigation was botched beyond the point where one could receive fair punishment or acquittal. Ebbert and Hall also relay the difficulties encountered during the investigation when so many people were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the conference, and trying to protect themselves and the institution they served. The whole Tailhook conference, the accusations of harassment during the conference and the way the Navy reacted before outside forces applied pressure are all telltale signs of what the built up resentments could result in. While it is true that there were a significant number of women in the Navy, an undercurrent of resentment and doubt about the right and capabilities of women to serve was also present. With a writing that was middle of the road, Ebbert and Hall point out the people who took the blame for more than they deserved, but also the fact that many wrongdoers faced no consequences. In this aftermath of Tailhook, the Navy had to commit in action as well as word that women had a place in the Navy, and should not be punished for a willingness to serve.

This book was very well researched. From the first woman who enlisted the authors have documented the trends of women joining the Navy and the reasons for leaving. Some of the research would be useful to answer naysayers who claim that a woman would rather get pregnant and spend eighteen years raising a child than deploy on a sixth month cruise. Most of the women who join have the same reasons as men: job security, knowledge and patriotism about the United States. It is an interesting textbook read and is very enthusiastic about women and the contributions they have made to the Navy. *Crossed Currents* is a valuable resource for people to understand the Navy and its relationship with women from the inception of the service.

Ms. Tisdale is a graduate of Virginia Wesleyan College and a staff member of the museum.

Call Sign Revlon: The Life and Death of Navy Fighter Pilot Kara Hultgreen

by Sally Spears
Reviewed by Sarah Petrides



The issue of women in the military has gone undercover with the demise of Tailhook litigation and the recertification of that conference as an appropriate official venue for military travel. However, a recent spate of books on the subject promise to reopen the issue; among these is *Call Sign Revlon*, a combination biography/polemic by Sally Spears, the mother of naval aviator Kara Hultgreen. In her career as a naval officer, Hultgreen was a vocal activist agitating for the right of women to participate in combat, with all the job options that entailed—including flying fighter planes. She was also one of that first class of women trained to fly the planes—and she was the first to die, just four months after receiving her F-14A flight clearance. In *Call Sign Revlon*, Sally Spears attempts to defend her daughter from the many critics who, after the accident, accused both Hultgreen and the Navy of complicity in the crash. Hultgreen, according to her accusers, was culpable because of her eagerness to fly fighter planes and her feminist campaigning; the Navy, because they "gave in to feminists" and "pushed" women through the pipeline, approving incompetent pilots simply because of their gender. However, even when examining *Call Sign Revlon* with the compassion due to a bereaved parent's requiem for a child, the discerning reader is forced to realize that the book has some irritating flaws.

Sally Spears. *Call Sign Revlon: The Life and Death of Navy Fighter Pilot Kara Hultgreen.* Annapolis: Naval Insitute Press, 1998. ISBN 1-555750-809-7 293 pages. $29.95

The first problem with *Call Sign Revlon* is Sally Spears' insistence on proving her daughter remarkable. Hultgreen's academic record and her athletic achievements are certainly superlative. But passages such as the following were ill-considered: "She had on a black miniskirt, dagger heels that elevated her above the six-foot mark, a black lace camisole that was almost covered by a double-breasted, fitted tuxedo jacket, and dangling earrings.... When she got off the elevator, the reaction was what could be expected when an imposing, beautiful, dressed-to-kill (or at least seriously injure) woman appeared in the midst of a tribal gathering of warriors in war paint."

This is a description of Hultgreen's participation in the infamous Tailhook conference—and the "reaction" of the "tribal gathering of warriors in war paint" was to behave in such a way that Hultgreen became Victim Number 5. Since one of the major arguments of those opposed to women in the military in general and in combat positions specifically is the worry of sexual activity between female and male personnel or that male soldiers will be distracted by the sexual auras of their female counterparts, the passages describing Hultgreen's nubility —and they are legion—are hardly conducive to convincing the opposition that women will not be a social liability in a group of military personnel. Hultgreen's male counterparts emphasized her "one of the guys" camaraderie and her ability to match men's physical and training requirements—and her mother negates this in her desire to highlight Hultgreen's beauty and femininity.

Another flaw of this book is in the issues it ignores. Spears does not sufficiently excoriate the officers who released her daughter's flight records to the press. This was strictly against all military codes of behavior. Spears should have ruthlessly confronted this behavior, demanding an apology. Also, by the time this book was published, evidence had been produced (most notably on CBS's "60 Minutes") that Hultgreen and her compatriots were indeed rushed through the flight training pipeline so the Navy could claim it had women flying its fighter jets. In Spears' zeal to prove her daughter's competence, she refuses to consider the fact that, if her daughter was indeed unqualified to fly F-14As and was allowed in the cockpit, then the Navy is guilty as an institution of reckless endangerment. Spears is not, of course, an impartial reporter—perhaps she should have confined herself to memorializing her daughter's character and avoided political issues entirely, as she is too defensive to be trusted.

The facts of the Hultgreen case will likely never be known, and as women prove themselves over and over again in the cockpit, the significance of the case will pall. This book, too, will become less a historical (if biased) account of an incident and more an artifact of an era of sexism which future generations will hopefully find it difficult to believe existed. *Call Sign Revlon* will not be a lasting memorial to a woman who, whether or not she could fly a fighter plane, was a remarkable officer who won the loyalty of many of her compatriots. Hultgreen's gravestone in Arlington cemetery will have to serve that purpose.

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U-571: *Post-Modernism Strikes*

Historical fiction is one of the more popular forms of media in America today. Some of the best selling and most admired works of writing and movie productions are ones based on a famous historical event or person. Anyone who is a fan of Patrick O'Brian's many novels or has seen the movie *Amistad* would agree. The challenge posed to historians by historical fiction is that by its very nature, writers use some poetic license with the history in order to make a good, readable story.

Now before you jump on the Sage for

The Museum Sage

criticizing historical fiction, let him first say that he is not. Good historical fiction is well researched and does make a very good read. Many historical novels have done historians a great service, particularly in the area of the American Civil War.

The problem comes with the reader of the book and viewer of the movie. What happens when people start believing the fiction before the history? A "post-modernist" historian might respond to that question by saying what's the difference? For those of you who have not had the pleasure of discussing post-modernist history, the concept simply put (if that is possible) believes that there is no set "truth" about the past. The "true" past, in the post-modernist historian's viewpoint, is only what a writer says it is when he or she writes it down on paper. "The truth is in the language" is how my historiography professor explained this theory of history.

The recently released movie *U-571* is particularly problematic. For those of you who have not seen it, *U-571* is the story of a group of American submariners who set out to capture a German U-boat and its Enigma encoding machine. The heroes lose their boat and have to take *U-571* back home in the face of enemy opposition. The story is of course completely fictitious. However, don't tell that to some people who have seen this movie. Despite a disclaimer at the end of the movie informing movie goers of the true event, the Sage is being approach by people believing that this movie depicts how we really nabbed the Enigma machine. People apparently are believing the movie is "based on actual events."

American sailors from the Norfolk-based USS Pillsbury *(DE-133) storm aboard* U-505 *in one of the most celebrated actions in U.S. Naval history. Unforunately, despite the producers' disclaimers, Hollywood has probably forever tainted the event with the movie* U-571.

If this is the case, then maritime museums, both public and private, have their work cut out for themselves. The shame of it all is that the real story of how American sailors captured a German U-boat is better than the movie ever could be. For the record, the crew of the Norfolk-based escort carrier USS *Gudalcanal* (CVE-60) and the sharp-witted CO, Capt. Daniel Gallery along with the destroyer escort USS *Pillsbury* (DE-133) are the real heroes. Even this capture was not the first such event as the British had captured two Enigma machines before 1944.

U-571 is most certainly not the first movie about World War II with a fictitious plot. *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line* are two more recent examples, with *Kelley's Heroes* and *Mr. Roberts* being older examples. What makes these four movies different from *U-571* is the distinction between what is fact and fiction is clear. In the case of *Saving Private Ryan* and *The Thin Red Line*, we know what happened at D-Day and the eight-month struggle at Guadualcanal. These movies' fictitious story lines do not try to change the basic facts of the battles. In the case of *Kelley's Heroes* and *Mr. Roberts* it is very clear that they are stories and nothing more. The plot

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of *Kelley's Heroes* is of a group of bored U.S. Army soldiers going to get a stash of Nazi gold in France. It's one of the best war movies ever made in The Sage's opinion (which, by the way, the production staff of the recent film *Three Kings* outright stole with out so much as a mention of *Kelly's Heroes*). The uniforms are correct, the equipment is correct, and they even had the markings on the German Tiger tanks right. But it is nothing more than a fairy tale of GIs striking it rich.

U-571 is also not the first, nor will it be the last, shoot'em up, action film. The Sage has nothing against action movies except maybe the level of violence in some, but that is for other people to debate. Heaven knows the Sage has seen enough action movies to personally bankroll every major movie studio. From *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* and *Starship Troopers* to every John Wayne war movie ever made, the Sage has seen them all.

The problem is this: The Sage just successfully completed the historiography course at Old Dominion University and argued quite forcefully that post-modernists are wrong. It is the Sage's belief that there is a truth to past events. Something happened in the past and it is our goal to find it and out and learn from it. This one of the reasons places like the Hampton Roads Naval Museum exists in the first place. We have artifacts. While artifacts can be misinterpreted, the object itself is real.

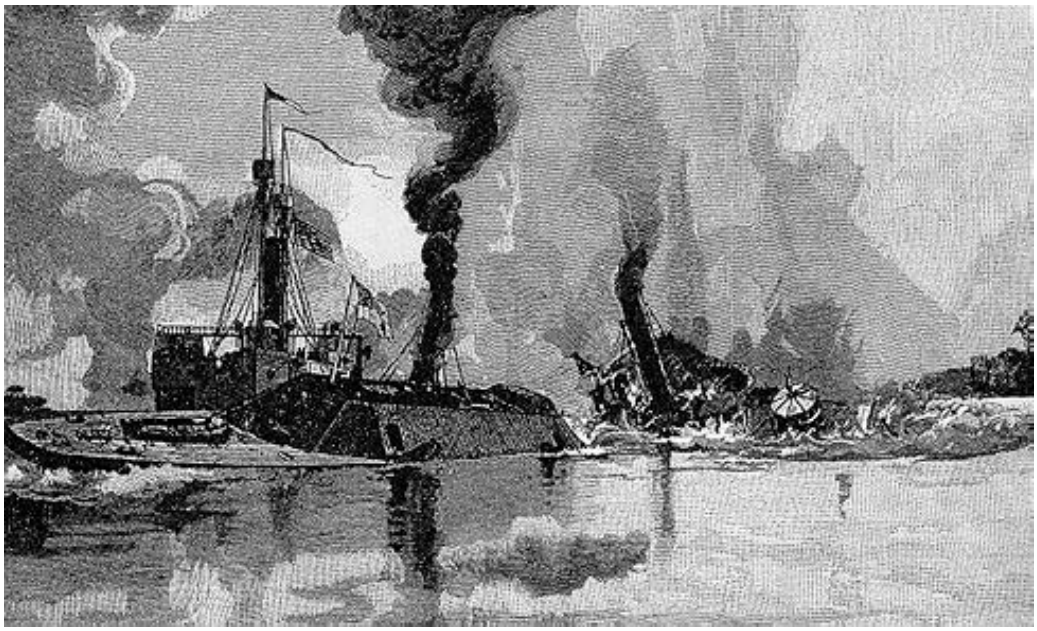
It could be that The Sage is taking this movie entirely too seriously. But, is this what "history" has come to? Maybe the post-modernists are right after all. The *U-505*/USS *Gudalcanal* story has been told thousands of times. The actual U-boat is on exhibit at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry for goodness sakes! But apparently, if a movie tells people eight sailors seized from an American submarine took a German submarine home with the Enigma machine, then well, it really happened.

The other way to look at *U-571* is to say that there is no reason to connect it with post-modernist thought or any other form of historical theory. It might be more simple to say that the producers just wanted a good action flick to make a quick buck. OK, fair enough, that is the movie producers' job, to make money. But even if you look it at from this viewpoint, it is still disappointing. Thanks in large part to computer-aided graphics, bigger production budgets, and the use of professional historians as consultants, historically-based movies within the last few years have really been fairly accurate and have gone out of their way to be accurate. Hopefully, producers will continue to show a little discipline in the future. Additionally, we as consumers of these products need to be more mindful of what is historical fact and what is not.

Useful Web Sites

naval-station.norfolk.va.us-This is the official site for Naval Station Norfolk, the world's largest naval station. The site provides information about ships currently in port, information on base tours, and services provided by the command to service members stationed in the area.

www.nara.gov-This is the offical site of the National Archives and Records Admistration. This site contains a treasure chest of information on current and past Federal laws, information about the National Archives and the records it keeps, and online exhibits. National Archives is where one finds information on ship plans and records.



*Lee warned local Union Army and Naval officers stationed in North Carolina that their forces were spread too thinly. The warnings fell on deaf ears. In the Spring of 1864, Confederates launched a counter-offensive that resulted in the lost of a few outposts, Plymouth, NC, two gunboats, and 2,200 soldiers. Lee, as he usually did, adamantly defended the Navy against Army accusations that the Navy was unprepared. (*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War *engraving)*

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off and land back in their laps. The results were equally ugly as *Southfield* was lost and *Miami* severely damaged.

Lee expressed both his disappointment and anger to Secretary Welles when he heard about the defeat at Plymouth. Gen. Butler placed the blame on the Navy for not supporting the positions. "Nothing can be more ungenerous and unjust than to make the Navy responsible for the occupation or surrender for this fortified town," Lee commented to Welles. To back up his claim, he attached three copies of letters he had written the year before that warned of impending disaster.

Cooperation with the Army was still a necessity. As part of Gen. Grant's overall 1864 strategy to capture Richmond, he instructed Butler and the Army of the James to march on Petersburg. Butler requested assistance from Lee to transport and escort the entire army, all 40,000 of them, up the James River to Bermuda Hundred. It was Butler's opinion that by moving the Army by water, he would be able to sneak up and surprise the Confederates. Lee happily agreed though he commented to Butler that "I do not see clearly how such a movement can be a made a surprise, as the enemy has a signal corps along the James River."

It would not be hard for the Confederate Signal Corps to miss it either. The fleet consisted of over 70 vessels including several monitors, gunboats, transports, New York ferry boats, and the recently captured Confederate ironclad *Atlanta*. Butler even added his own little squadron to "make his own command a perfect unit" a brigadier general later cynically commented. The same general described the fleet to be "some grand national review." It may seem like Lee was being a bit too cautious, but one must remember that the Confederates possessed three ironclads, several wooden gunboats, shore batteries, and torpedo traps (which had already sunk a few gunboats) guarding the river. No challenge was made, however, and the Army of the James safely landed at Bermuda Hundred.

"Nothing can be more ungenerous and unjust than to make the Navy responsible for the occupation or surrender for this fortified town."

-Lee to Secretary Welles concerning the Union disaster at Plymouth, NC.

After this major operation, Lee instructed the squadron to make preparations at Trent's Reach should the Confederates decide to sortie. He also proposed several plans to capture Fort Fisher and close Wilmington to blockade-runners. These plans fell on deaf ears.

Despite Lee's success and his efficient operation of the squadron, he continued to irritate Welles by his constant requests for ships and men. He was surprised when Welles told him in September 1864 that he was going to be replaced by Rear Adm. David Farragut. Welles felt that Lee was competent, but that he was not the flamboyant risk-taker that the blockade needed at the time. To Welles, Lee was too

Lee was extremely fortunate to have two very talented and energetic junior officers, Lt. Cushing (shown here) and Lt. Lamson working for him. Cushing sank the troublesome CSS Albemarle *and Lamson helped the army at the Battle of Suffolk. In many ways, Lee treated the two of them like favorite sons. (*Battle and Leaders of the Civil War *engraving)*

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"A grand national review" is how one Union general describe Lee's armada that moved Butler's Army of the James from Hampton Roads up to Bermuda Hundred. Over 70 vessels were involved including the double turreted monitor USS Onondaga *and the recently captured Confederate ironclad* Atlanta. *The fleet moved 40,000 troops with no opposition. (1864* Harper's Weekly *engraving)*

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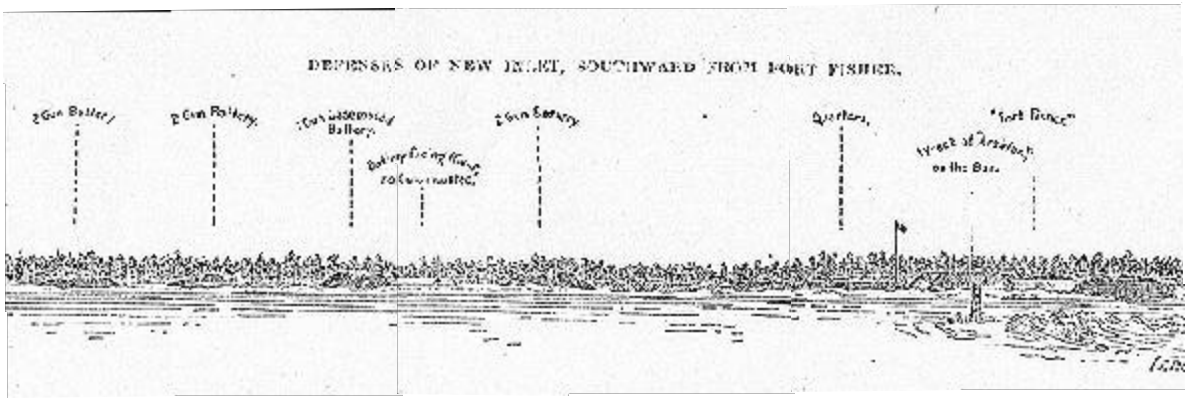
"cautious" for the kind of action needed to secure the Southern ports for the Union—this idea diverged from Porter's opinion that administrative acumen, not flashy operations, were needed to run the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

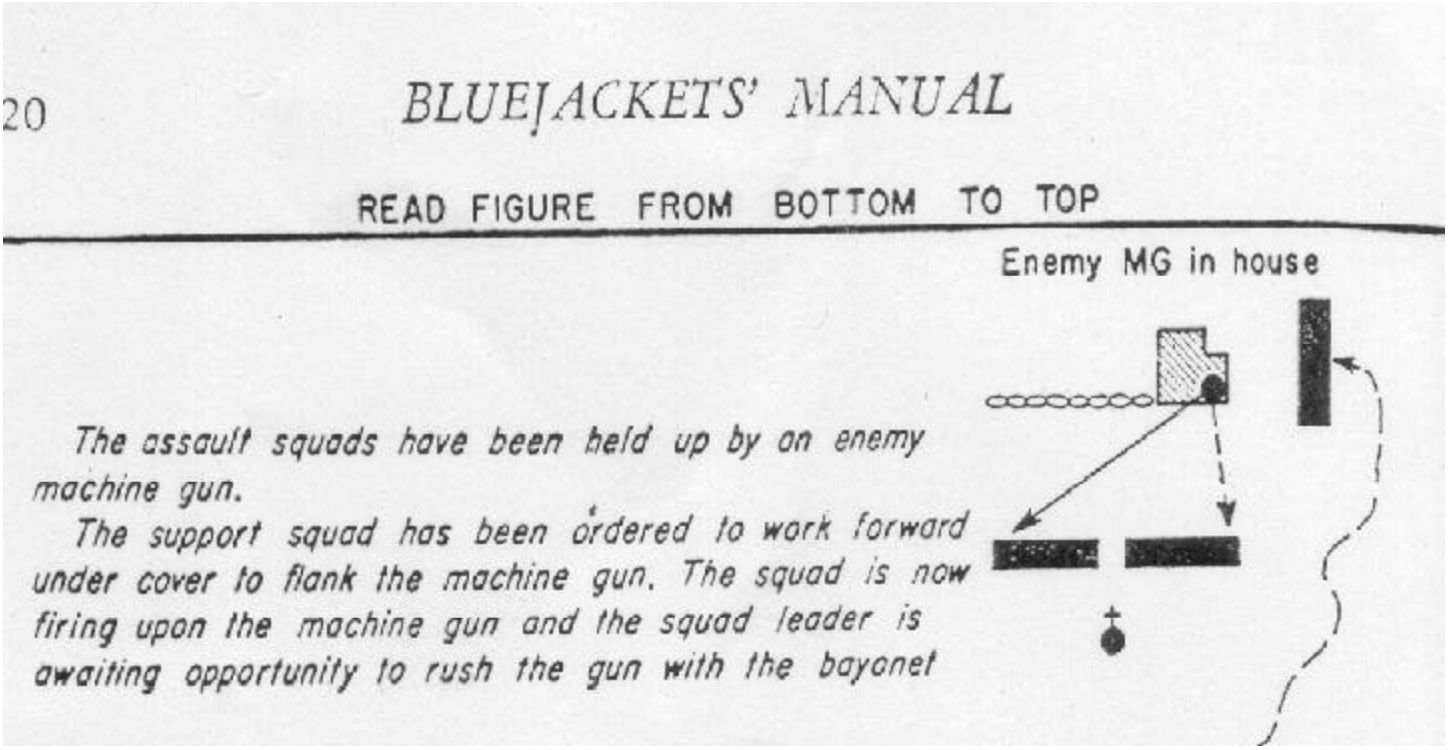
Lee understood his removal as a political hatchet job instigated both by generals whom he had alienated and by election-year enemies of his in-laws, the Blairs. To Lee, the excuse of his exaggerated caution was not sufficient. After all, he had wanted to attack Wilmington from the first, instead of blockading it, but had felt restricted by the Department of the Navy's stinginess with men and supplies. Lee thought that other great actions could have been his had he been adequately outfitted with the ships he had requested. In any case, he gamely accepted the consolation prize of acting rear admiral of the Mississippi Squadron.

Here, Lee again showed detail-oriented thoroughness and his managerial mettle as he successfully choreographed the movements of a large fleet of river-ships on a huge and complex section of the Mississippi and its tributaries. Nevertheless, he was glad to return to his wife and Washington when the war was over. Although his career in the Navy continued to flourish, and he ended his tenure as an admiral (not an acting admiral, a real one, as his wife was quick to point out), the end of the Civil War was also the end of Lee's travelling ambitions. The man who had once persistently lobbied for rigorous duty was at last content to stay home.



Lee submitted plans and scouting reports, like the one shown above, on Ft. Fisher to his superiors as early as Spring 1863. However, Welles transfered Lee out West and gave Porter the chance to seize the "Gibraltar of the South" instead. (May 2, 1864 Official Records of the War of the Rebellion*)*

Don't Quit Your Day Job



Located within a copy of the 1940 edition of the Navy's *Bluejackets' Manual* is a section on infantry tactics. This was deemed necessary as historically the Navy provided armed landing parties. This particular diagram shows what the author considers the best way to take an enemy occupied building containing a machine-gun. The author's solution? Fix bayonets and storm the building in the same spirit as World War I. Good thing the Navy had Marines.

In Our Next Issue….

- On Wisconsin! A New Special Series on BB-64 and Her Arrival in Downtown Norfolk

- Book Reviews: *Millions for Defense: The Subscription Warships of 1798* by Frederick C. Leiner and *When Computers Went to Sea: The Digitization of the United States Navy* by David L. Boslaugh